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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide contains outlines for short courses in poetry, prose narrative, the personal essay, and the short story. Each outline lists objectives, the content emphasized, class activities, means of evaluating student performance, and the length of time for the short course. The last section of the guide presents the requirements for individual projects in creative writing. (BB)

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CREATIVE WRITING

Cedar Falls High School
English Department
1974

Prepared by
Helen McDowell

CS 801 077

Floyd G. Winter
Principal

Lee Ver Mulm
Department Chairman

1. Poetry

A. Objectives
   1. Growth in sense of discovery--receptivity to images, response
   2. Ability to find materials from live experience and from recall that have individuality
   3. Willingness to read orally and to discuss poems, from good authors and students, that demonstrate sensitivity and perception
   4. Knowledge of writing craft and gradual application to own writing
   5. Growth in knowledge and use of individuality, suggestion, universality
   6. Growth in willingness to experiment, to revise, to keep writing

B. Content emphasis
   1. Adventure in living by developing a sense of awareness
      a. Observation of live imagery
      b. Delight in photography and art as an experience
   2. Recognition of the aesthetic in poetry--glad, dramatic, dark beauty. Poems from Mosaic, Poetry II.
   3. Experiences and responses of various poets

a.	The Hedgerow	H. McDowell
b.	This is My Country,	R. P. T. Coffin
c.	Four Ducks On a Pond,	W. Allingham
d.	Spring and All,	W. C. Williams

   4. The recall of a writer
      a. Experience as individual

Sea Fever	John Masefield
Feather	Lew Sarett
Daffodils	W. Wordsworth
The Fish	Eliz. Bishop
The Great Lover	Rupert Brooke

   5. The craft of writing poetry
      a. Figurative language--imagery, simile, metaphor, personification, symbol

The Mountains are Lonely Folk	H. Garland
Solitaire	Amy Lowell
The Warning	A. Croysey

      b. Other poetic devices--rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and sound (oral reading to illustrate sound and Lew Sarett's theory of rhythm)

A Vagabond Song, Bliss Carman
Sea Fever, J. Masefield
Trade Winds,
The Highwayman, Alfred Noyes
The Ballad of East and West, R. Kipling

c. Language - Connotative words for suggestiveness. Fresh words for individuality, beauty, and signifance. Conciseness.
Deserted, M. Cawein
The Eagle, A. Tennyson
The Warning, A. Cropsey

d. Form and Structure. Reference to poems already used.
Addition:
Meeting at Night, R. Browning
Recuerdo, E. S. V. Millay
How Do I Love Thee? E. B. Browning
In Just, e. e. cummings
The Cow Trail, H. McDowell

e. The poem as an idea--meaning and tone
Prayers of Steel, C. Sandburg
I Never Saw a Moor, E. Dickinson
Auto Wreck, Karl Shapiro
Solitude, A. Pope
fate is Unfair, Don Marquis
Sea Lullaby, Elinor Wylie
Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind, C. Sandburg

6. Ways to improve writing so poetry will reveal individuality, suggestion, and universality
   a. Using revision
   b. Writing many poems and experimenting
   c. Giving attention to constructive criticism
   d. Reading literary poems that have individuality, suggestion, universality

C. Activities
1. Discussion after lectures
2. Discussion of student poems on board
3. Reading of poems studied
4. Rhythm in Music, Mr. John Evenson, Music Director
5. Rhythm in Art, Mr. Jerry Nissen, Art Instructor
6. Student Conferences

D. Evaluation
   1. The writing of six or more poems that reveal a growing knowledge of poetry craft
   2. Evidence of growth in experimentation, revision, and ability to keep writing
      (measured in part by personal writing of "The Great Lover" and imagery poems)
   3. Growth in awareness of own areas of interest, and own writing craft or lack of it
   4. Growth in awareness of nature and people as an ever fresh source for material
   5. Some knowledge of how to use recall, and the realization of the wealth of material in own individual past
   6. Growth in willingness to read orally and discuss the experience and writing craft of various authors and students

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time -- 5 weeks

II. Prose Narrative

A. Objectives
1. Growth in awareness of nature, and a desire to seek interesting sensory experiences for writing
2. To read with enjoyment and profit writers who can reveal experience with truth and imagination
3. To write two experiences with nature or exotic city sights showing some mastery of techniques for literary nonfiction
4. To revise material and edit for publication
5. Hopefully, to enjoy the out-of-doors and feel a sense of harmony with the Universe, or at least respect for all life

B. Content emphasis
1. Seeking fresh sensory experiences
   a. Walking alone for the usual, the unusual
   b. Developing awareness and response
2. Recalling past experiences that may grow into a piece of literary nonfiction
3. Reading in and discussion of writing from books, magazines, and works of students to recognize individuality and craft

Driftwood Valley,	T. C. Stan-Fletcher
North to the Orient,	Anne Lindberg
The Singing Wilderness,	S. F. Olson
The Lonely Land	
Runes of the North	
My Wilderness (both),	W. O. Douglas
An Inland Voyage,	R. L. Stevenson

4. The craft of writing—includes how to get individuality and universality
   a. The nature of sensory experiences
   b. The nature of point of view, tone
   c. Organization and order
      chronological, geographical, spacial
   d. Discourse within a frame
      concrete description to give pleasure, reality
      narration to give movement, suspense
      exposition for explanation, author's comment
   e. Language (largely covered in poetry)
      should reveal knowledge
      accurate nature and geographical
      some figurative language
   f. Choosing an appropriate title
   g. Revising for an individual style
   h. Editing for publication in Tiger Hi-Line

C. Activities
   1. Some discussion of books--large and small groups
      a. Writer's experience
      b. Selection of subject matter
      c. Writing craft
   2. Reading comments from various papers on class writing
   3. Reading excerpts from good prose narratives to show writing techniques
   4. Isador, Canadian Wilderness Guide, Marvin Ziesmer
   5. Student Conferences

D. Evaluation
   1. The writing of one or two prose narratives from live experience or from recall revealing a degree of craft
   2. The writing of a paragraph of description revealing observation and the ability to use concrete detail
   3. The ability to revise and edit for publication in the Tiger Hi-Line
   4. Willingness to read and discuss the work of a variety of prose narrative authors and students

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time. 2 1/2 weeks.

III. Personal Essay

A. Objectives
1. To write one or two personal essays, preferably humorous, revealing enough techniques to attract a reader
2. To read with enjoyment and be able to discuss a variety of personal essays
3. To notice and enjoy personal essay writers and humorists in newspapers, magazines, and books.
4. Hopefully, to become more aware of the amusing aspects of living and the possibility of channeling grievances and moods into a piece of writing.

B. Content emphasis
1. What a personal essay is
   a. It is personal--it deals with topics the writer has experienced
   b. It takes us inside his mind and emotions letting us see how he reacts to what he sees and does
   c. It is somewhat loosely organized but does have a degree of unity as it sticks fairly well to the topic
   d. It may start far from the main topic but it spends most of the time on the writer's greatest concern
   e. The style is light or pleasantly meditative
2. How to find subject matter (initiated by reading aloud a variety of subjects and styles followed by discussion)
   Tribute to Trees
   Innocence Abroad — With the Doctor
   Oh, for a Woodshed — Why Vermont?
3. Recognition of the characteristics of the personal essay by reading and discussion of essays of good writers and students
   The Laundry Problem — S. Leacock
   Old Junk and New Money
   University Days, — J. Thurber
   The Night the Ghost Got In
   The Day the Dam Broke
   The Treasurer's Report, — R. Benchley
   Also, individual reading
4. Writing the personal essay
   Analysis of My War With the Ospreys by John Steinbeck
   a. Finding a subject from experience
   b. Writing out the feeling

c. Noting organization and development.
   has a very versatile form
   may be loosely or tightly constructed
   paragraphs may be short or medium
   employs narration, description, explosition, even dialogue
d. Noting language and tone.
   language should be appropriate to the subject, speaker, audience
   tone should start at once and be consistent
e. Revising for an individual style
f. Editing for publication in Tiger Hi-Line

C. Activities
   1. Some reading aloud of essays
   2. Some reading of excerpts to note tone
   3. Frequent conferences

D. Evaluation
   1. The writing of one or two essays that reveal a degree of craft and are pleasurable to read
   2. Willingness to read and discuss a variety of essays from the standpoint of author's experience and craft
   3. The ability to revise
   4. The ability to edit

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time. 2 1/2 weeks.

IV. Short Story

A. Objectives
1. To write an incident and one or two short stories revealing enough mastery of craft to interest a reader
2. To read and discuss a variety of short stories for pleasure, insight, and craft
3. To learn revision, editing, and some knowledge of publication
4. Hopefully, to broaden interests for future reading, to become more human, to become aware of own individuality, to enjoy writing stories.

B. Content emphasis
1. The incident approach
   a. Recognition of the impact of experience
   b. Getting a sense of scene
   c. Revelation of character through dramatization (all three taught by discussion of: "Bill," "They Never Walk Alone," "John's Way")
   d. Movement
2. Getting a concept for a story
(Taught by reading of my short stories followed by discussion of writer's experience and techniques)
   a. Impact of personal experience
      The Rose Umbrella
   b. Impact of a person
      Ann Jordan
   c. Impact of a news article
      One Man's Job
   d. Impact of a phrase
      Call It Life
   e. Impact of the imagination
      The Little Flower
3. Review of the elements of the short story through reading and discussion of a variety of stories
   a. Sense of scene.
      To give reality and unity, to set mood, to give background for characters
      Love of Life, Jack London
   b. Revelation of character--direct, indirect
      use of dialogue to advance plot, to establish character more deeply

The Revolt of Mother — M. Freeman
The Verger, — S. Maugham
Molly Morgan, — J. Steinbeck
Quality, — J. Galsworthy

c. Development of plot
Situation--everyday, unusual, supernatural
Incidents and episodes
Conflicts--movement, slowing down
Resolution--types of endings
Unity--emotional involvement
Love of Life, — J. London

d. Point of View
Omniscient
The Enemy, — Pearl Buck
Characters
Joy Ride, — Edith List
Jim Bree, — B. Johansson

e. Unity in theme, tone, language, symbol
Joy Ride, — Edith List
Jim Bree — B. Johansson
The Enemy, — Pearl Buck
A White Heron, — S. O. Jewett
The Ship That Found Herself, — R. Kipling

4. Attaining individuality
a. Through uniqueness of concept
b. Through area of subject matter
Love of Life, — Jack London
c. Through form
Joy Ride, — Edith List
d. Through economy, tone, language, symbol
All of the stories

5. Individual reading for pleasure and profit
Midwest
Venture
Seven

6. Writing stories for children (optional, five or six students interested)

7. Editing and markets.

C. Activities
1. Discussion for analysis
2. Reading of excerpts to reveal scenes, character, atmosphere
3. Frequent conferences

D. Evaluation
1. The writing of an incident and one or more short stories revealing enough mastery of craft to interest a reader

2. Willingness to read, and discuss a variety of short stories from the standpoint of craft
3. The ability to revise and edit
4. Growth in broadening reading experiences, in becoming more human, in developing individuality

E. Resources -- At end of course outline

F. Length of time. 3 weeks.

V. Individual Projects

A. Objectives
1. To have more opportunity to write in an area of interest.
2. To have more individual guidance in perception, in planning, and in improving writing craft
3. To have an opportunity to browse in writing by own age group
4. To become more familiar with contemporary poetry
5. To improve initiative and writing habits
6. To find time to learn about publishing

B. Content emphasis
1. Giving the students an opportunity to write in the area of their interests
   a. Review of poetry as an experience, as a craft
      Comparisons and evaluations
      Outlines I, II, III
      Individuality, suggestion, universality

Velvet Shoes,	Elinor Wylie
Silver,	W. De La Mar
Moonlight,	Berta H. Nance
Buffalo Dusk,	C. Sandburg
Nocturne in a Deserted Brickyard,	C. Sandburg
The Hedgerow,	H. McDowell
To an Oak,	D. Grimes
Elegy For The Wild Plum,	Sister M. Therese

   b. Examination of earlier writing for the possibility of revisions and rewrites
   c. Submission of plans for the unit through frequent conferences
2. Reading poetry of own age group in magazines
   Mosaic
   High School Magazines
   Young America Sings
   Lyrical Iowa
   Others
3. Becoming more familiar with contemporary poetry

a. Readings from
   James Hearst — Paul Engle
   Karl Shapiro — Robert Bly
   Others brought by students
b. Readings from
   Poetry
   Midwest
   Seven
   Several College Magazines
   Saturday Review
   Others brought by students

4. Learning about publishing
   Popular magazines
   College magazines
   Small poetry collections
   Children's books--poetry and picture books
5. Selecting and editing two poems for 1969 Mosaic

C. Activities
1. Some group discussion
2. Some reading of poems
3. Kuder Preference Test
4. Frequent conferences

D. Evaluation
1. The equivalent of a good poem or piece of prose per week
2. Knowledge of revisions and editing--revealed in improvement of writing
3. Completion of special projects
   A collection of poems
   A children's picture book
   Children's stories
4. Willingness to read, to take part in discussion, and to grow in initiative and craft

E. Resources

F. Length of time -- 6 weeks.